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Viewing cable 08PARISFR2220, UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL CAMPAIGN: BELGIAN AND

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08PARISFR2220	2008-12-08 16:58	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Mission UNESCO

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.semana.com/wikileaks/Seccion/168.aspx>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L   UNESCO/PARI   12082220
VZCZCXRO1015
PP RUEHFL RUEHKN RUEHMJ RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHPB RUEHQU RUEHRN
DE RUEHFR #2220/01 3431658
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 081658Z DEC 08
FM UNESCO PARIS FR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO RUCNSCO/UNESCO COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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id: 181899
date: 12/8/2008 16:58
refid: 08PARISFR2220
origin: Mission UNESCO
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination:
header:
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C O N F I D E N T I A L   UNESCO/PARI   12082220
VZCZCXRO1015
PP RUEHFL RUEHKN RUEHMJ RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHPB RUEHQU RUEHRN
DE RUEHFR #2220/01 3431658
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 081658Z DEC 08
FM UNESCO PARIS FR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO RUCNSCO/UNESCO COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS FR 002220

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNESCO](#) [BE](#) [IT](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL CAMPAIGN: BELGIAN AND
ITALIAN VIEWS

REF: A. (A) PARIS FR 2153

[1](#)B. (B) PARIS FR 2202

[1](#)C. (C) PARIS FR 2209

Classified By: AMBASSADOR LOUISE V. OLIVER FOR REASON 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Belgian Ambassador to UNESCO told Ambassador Oliver December 5 that Belgium does not support the candidacy of Egypt's Minister of Culture, Farouk Hosni, for UNESCO's next Director General (DG). The Belgian Ambassador also speculated on the possibility that Ingrid Bettancourt might become a candidate. Ambassador Oliver also met with the Italian Ambassador to UNESCO, who explained that Italy has not yet decided how to handle Mr. Hosni's candidacy, as it is a complicated situation for them. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador Oliver met with Belgium's Ambassador to UNESCO, Philippe Kridelka, on December 5. In response to a question from Ambassador Oliver regarding a statement at a recent EU meeting indicating Belgian discontent with Mr. Hosni, Ambassador Kridelka said that the comment had been made by a representative of the French Community in Belgium and was inappropriate, though correct. He said that in addition to being under great pressure from the Jewish community in Antwerp to oppose Mr. Hosni's candidacy, memories of World War II were still very strong in Belgium.

[1](#)3. (C) Ambassador Oliver and Ambassador Kridelka then discussed ways of slowing the momentum of Mr. Hosni's candidacy, including by trying to prevent African states from endorsing Mr. Hosni at their meeting in mid-January. Ambassador Kridelka was very receptive to Ambassador Oliver's suggestion that given the Government of Belgium's (GOB) strong relationships with various African states, the GOB could contact them to suggest that they postpone endorsing any candidate until the July African Union meeting. Ambassador Oliver asked to be kept informed on any Belgian contacts with African states, as the U.S. would probably be in contact with some of them as well. The Belgian Ambassador agreed to do so.

[1](#)4. (C) Ambassador Kridelka then speculated on the possible candidacy of Ingrid Bettancourt. He said that she had been making many speeches recently, and was about to visit the capitals of eight Latin American countries. The Belgian Ambassador suggested that France might be very pleased with Mrs. Bettancourt's candidacy, given her special relationship with France and President Sarkozy's role in ending her captivity. He added that when he asked a high level member of the French government about this possibility, the response had been that France had no position on this idea. However, Ambassador Kridelka said that he knew that the chief of staff of Bernard Kouchner, France's Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, had recently had dinner with Mrs. Bettancourt's mother. (COMMENT: Mission will try to gather more information on this possibility but has not heard other delegations mention this possibility. END COMMENT)

[1](#)5. (C) During a meeting with Italy's Ambassador to UNESCO, Giuseppe Moscato, on December 5, Ambassador Oliver was told that Italy did not know what to do about Mr. Hosni. Ambassador Moscato said that when Mr. Hosni's candidacy was first announced, the Prodi government had some sympathy for it, as Mr. Hosni used to run an Egyptian cultural center in Rome, and spoke Italian. He added, however, that things had changed since Mr. Hosni's remarks on burying Israeli books in

Egyptian libraries, as Italy was close to Israel and had a strong Jewish lobby. Ambassador Moscato said that he did not know what the Berlusconi government's position on this matter was, and that he had no reports on whether Mr. Hosni's candidacy had been discussed when President Mubarak met with Prime Minister Berlusconi in Rome three months ago.

¶6. (C) In response to a question from Ambassador Oliver on a possible Italian candidate, Ambassador Moscato said that there had been some thought given to that possibility. He said, however, that he had advised against doing that, as it would be difficult for someone from Western Europe to be elected UNESCO's next DG so soon after having had a Spanish DG. He also said that he had told his government that it was too soon to endorse any candidate, since Italy would want to have a high level position in the administration of the next DG, and therefore needed to be very careful not to alienate any candidate. However, the Italian Ambassador also said that he thought he would have little influence on decisions made by his government, and said that his only role was to share information and express opinions.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: Pressure from Israel on Belgium and Italy could be effective with those countries, especially since Egypt is aggressively trying to line up support for Mr. Hosni

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by lobbying capitals. Although in the interview published by Al-Ahram, Mr. Hosni had claimed that he had support from Italy, that claim seems to be slightly exaggerated. Given the undercurrent of discomfort that is developing at UNESCO, it is likely that Egypt will strengthen its lobbying even more. The emergence of a public figure such as Ingrid Bettancourt as a possible alternative candidate would completely change the race for the next DG, as it would slow down or even stop the Egyptians from being able to obtain endorsements for Mr. Hosni. END COMMENT.

OLIVER
#2220

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C O N F I D E N T I A L UNSCOPARI 12082220

=====CABLE ENDS=====